

## CHAPTER 3

# FIRST DUTY ADVICE

This chapter covers a wide range of topics designed to help you on your first tour of duty. We cannot anticipate all the problems a newly commissioned officer might encounter, so we will concentrate on the more common ones.

### BEFORE REPORTING

Should you write to your new ship or station before reporting? Yes, that shows an interest in your first duty assignment. Write your letter of introduction to the executive officer well in advance of your reporting date. A standard business letter, preferably typed, is appropriate. You can find the correct format to use in preparing a business letter in the *Navy Correspondence Manual*, SECNAVINST 5216.5. The letter should include your anticipated reporting date and your address while on leave. If married, you may include the name of your spouse, number of children, and the date you expect to arrive in the area. You may also want to mention any qualifications you have that might influence your shipboard assignments.

### FINDING YOUR SHIP

Your orders will give the name of the ship or station to which you are to report and the date by which you are to report. Finding your ship or station may present complications. Your personnel office will make every effort to give you the location of your ship on the day you are due to report, but such information can change very rapidly.

Your new duty station is your best source of current information. As mentioned above, write a short letter to your executive officer (XO) concerning your reporting date, schools you are attending, and any pertinent personal information. Your XO will, in turn, provide you with information concerning the ship and its movement. A sponsor assigned by your new command will, if you desire, furnish additional information pertinent to your personal needs.

Many naval activities are at inconvenient locations, and their titles are sometimes deceptive. For instance, the Norfolk Naval Shipyard is not in Norfolk but in Portsmouth, Virginia; the Portsmouth

Naval Shipyard is near Portsmouth, New Hampshire, but is on an island connected by a bridge from Kittery, Maine; the Naval Submarine Base, New London, is in Groton, Connecticut. A map of the area will help you locate your activity. You can run up quite a taxi bill if you don't know exactly where you want to go.

While you may know your ship will be in the Norfolk area at the time you are due to report, its exact berth may be difficult to locate. It could be in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard (which is in Portsmouth), it could be at the naval station (Norfolk), or it might be at anchor, to mention only a few possibilities. When you arrive in the area, check your ship's location by calling ships information at the main activity or ask the shore patrol at the Navy Landing. You can usually find a boat schedule of your ship in the shore patrol office or posted at the Navy landing. At some ports, civilian water taxis make runs to ships at anchor and will take you to your ship for a small fee.

### SHIPS STATIONED IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

When reporting to the home port of a ship in the continental United States (CONUS), you may discover your ship is out for local operations and nobody knows when it will return. Now what do you do? The best thing to do is find out which squadron or division your ship is in and report to its office.

Ordinarily, a ship's division or squadron office is somewhere near the docks and is manned by a staff even if the ship is at sea. If your ship has no squadron or division office, check with the personnel office of the nearest naval command. Ask the personnel office to help you determine the command to which you should report pending the arrival of your ship. Ask that command to endorse your orders stating the date and time you reported.

### SHIPS STATIONED IN EUROPE

Many European nations require a visa or passport for travel into their territory. Consult NAVMIL-PERSCOMINST 4650.2 for general information on the subject of passports. NATO member nations

require supplemental travel orders in English and French attached to your regular travel orders. Consult with your personnel officer before your transfer.

When reporting to a ship in Europe, you will probably first go to Rota, Spain. From there, you will catch a flight to the port where you can meet your ship. If you should miss your ship at that port, check in with any naval activity to determine what information it has on your ship's location. If no naval activities are in the vicinity, check with the American Consulate. The Consulate will be aware of impending arrivals or cancellations.

## **SHIPS STATIONED IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC**

When reporting to a ship in the western Pacific (WESTPAC), you may have more difficulty getting to your ship than you would have experienced in the United States or Europe because of the greater distances involved. The hints we have just given for locating your ship also apply for WESTPAC. The Navy Aviation Transportation Coordination Office (ATCO) at Military Airlift Command (MAC) terminals can assist you in getting to your ship.

## **REPORTING ABOARD**

When reporting aboard a ship or shore station, wear either the uniform of the day prescribed for that area or the service dress blue. If you have dependents do not take them with you when you report; you will be busy enough without them. They can see the ship or shore station at a later date. (Do not forget to leave them with sufficient funds.)

The first impression you make will be important. Many people will be seeing you for the first time and will be sizing you up. Remember, you never have a second chance to make a good first impression. Therefore, ensure your appearance is "ready for inspection."

When you report to a ship, salute the colors aft, salute the officer of the deck (OOD), identify yourself, request permission to come aboard, and state that you are reporting aboard for duty. Give the OOD a copy of your orders. The OOD may also endorse the original copy. A messenger will probably take your bags to your room, but do not be above carrying them yourself if no one is available to help you.

## **CHECKING IN**

Most ships and shore stations have a standard check-in routine for new officers. On the off chance that your ship does not, remember the following points:

- Deliver the original and all copies of your orders to your ship's administrative or personnel office.
- After your orders have been properly endorsed and read by administrative personnel, deliver the original and several copies along with your pay record to your disbursing officer. If you do not have a pay record, your disbursing officer will need two copies of your orders to open your pay record and two more copies to pay you for transportation and any transportation for your dependents.
- If you are delivering your health record to your new station, deliver it to your medical officer or hospital corpsman.
- Your executive officer will give you a short brief. Be ready to discuss your professional qualifications, type of duty desired, and anything that might help your new command in assigning you to a billet. If several officers report aboard about the same time, the briefing may be in a group format.
- The needs of your command will dictate your billet assignment. If you do not get the billet you expect or want, do not feel dejected; accept the challenge and do the best job you can.
- Your commanding officer will give you a welcome aboard brief. This first impression will affect your whole tour aboard. Ensure your uniform and grooming are inspection-ready. Be yourself! Know the goals you want to achieve while on sea duty.

## **MAKING OFFICIAL CALLS**

When you talk with your executive officer, bring up the subject of calls and find out the policy of your command. In recent years, hail and farewell parties have replaced official calls at many commands. The "Social Etiquette" section of this booklet will attempt to clarify any further questions on calls.

## **RECEIVING COUNSELING**

Your commanding officer will seek information about your background and your personal ambitions. Your commanding officer will also ensure you are

aware of the availability of career information and assistance in your career guidance. You should discuss each of these subjects during your reporting interview.

Each command has its own counseling program for junior officers. You can expect an interview within 6 months of your reporting interview. This second interview provides your commanding officer with an opportunity to apprise you of your progress; it also provides you an opportunity to express your opinions on your current duties. Your commanding officer will discuss your career goals and the steps you must take to achieve these goals in each succeeding interview. You can request advice in preparing for and seeking future sea and shore assignments including various in-service educational opportunities.

Expect to be interviewed after 1 year and again 1 to 3 months before your rotation to another duty station or prospective release from active duty. The purpose of these interviews is either to discuss your career potential and allow adequate opportunity for coordinating your desires with the Bureau of Naval Personnel or to preface your return to civilian life. Your commanding officer will give you a frank and honest appraisal of your career potential as a naval officer. If you demonstrate career potential in your performance, your commanding officer will do everything possible to ensure your personal desires are considered along with the needs of the Navy.

### **SETTLING-IN**

Since any number of events could occur on your way to a new duty station, do not make the mistake of shipping all your earthly possessions ahead of you. Many new officers have lived in one uniform for several weeks because of this error in judgment. You can avoid such problems and be more comfortable if you carry another suitcase with extra uniforms and civilian clothes appropriate for the climate of your new duty station. They may make your stay more enjoyable in case you get stranded somewhere.

If you have dependents, we suggest you get them settled for the first few days in a hotel, motel, or one of the temporary lodging facilities listed in appendix III. Your sponsor can be infinitely helpful during your initial settling-in period.

## **OBTAINING HOUSING**

We advise you to write the housing office at your new duty station as far in advance as possible for any information on available housing. (If reporting to a ship, write the naval station housing office at your ship's home port.) Housing information is available from Navy Family Service Centers located at all major naval installations in the United States and overseas.

### **FAMILY HOUSING**

Do not sign any leases until you check with the housing section of the Family Service Center. The center will have the latest information on approved and available housing.

When you do sign a lease, be sure the lease includes a military clause. Without such a clause, you could find yourself paying extra rent if breaking your lease should become necessary.

**NOTE:** If you seek off-base housing, do not enter into a rental agreement until you review the listing of discriminatory and nondiscriminatory rental establishments maintained in the Housing Referral Office. Regulations prohibit you from entering into a rental agreement with an establishment listed as following a discriminatory rental policy.

### **BACHELOR HOUSING**

Navy policy places high priority on providing adequate living facilities for its personnel. In keeping with this policy, the Navy improved its criteria for construction of living facilities and established minimum standards of adequacy for volunteer assignment to Navy bachelor quarters. Unless dictated by military necessity, you will not be involuntarily assigned to accommodations that do not meet minimum standards of occupancy. When accommodations meeting the prescribed minimum standards are not available, you can live in the civilian community and receive Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ) and Variable Housing Allowance (VHA) or per diem, as applicable. When overseas, you qualify for a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) instead of VHA.

If you receive orders to a naval shore activity whose bachelor officers' quarters (BOQ) do not meet minimum occupancy standards, you can either choose to live in the inadequate quarters or request permission to reside in the local community. Make

sure your orders receive an endorsement reflecting the inadequate BOQ. Each command has instructions that outline the procedure for requesting permission to reside in civilian housing in lieu of inadequate BOQ. For further information, refer to OPNAVINST 11103.1. This instruction establishes Navy bachelor housing policy.

## **ADJUSTING TO LIFE ABOARD SHIP**

You will have to adjust to life aboard ship. One adjustment will be the limited space you will have to stow personal belongings. You will also have to learn the layout of the ship, when and where to report for quarters, and new names and faces.

## **STOWING PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Your room will have a safe in which you can stow your valuables. Obtain the combination to the safe from the security manager. Set a new combination on the safe using the printed instructions, if available, or follow the advice of an officer experienced in setting combinations. Try the new combination several times with the safe open.

Write the combination on a piece of paper and place it in a sealed envelope. On the outside of the envelope, write your name, your stateroom number, and the location of the safe within the stateroom. Give the envelope to the security manager. The security manager will only open your safe in case of an emergency.

After getting settled, remove any unnecessary baggage from your stateroom. We suggest you keep a small travel bag, one suitcase, and perhaps a duffel bag or folding nylon bag. Ask the supply officer about available stowage facilities for the rest of your baggage.

## **GETTING ACQUAINTED**

Find out what time and where to report for quarters and general quarters; also, find out where to go for drills and what your duties are.

Obtain copies of the *Booklet of General Plans*, *General Information Book* (for newer constructed ships, the title is *Ship Information Book*), and *Ship's Organization and Regulations Manual*. Also get copies of the fleet regulations, type commander's directives, squadron commander's directives, and a roster of the officers aboard. Start studying!

One of the best ways to get acquainted with your ship is to go through the ship from stem to stern and from top to bottom. You can ask questions freely without embarrassment while you are new. After you have been aboard a few months, you may feel foolish if you ask questions regarding things you should know. Nevertheless, do not hesitate to ask.

Learn the names of your fellow officers and the enlisted personnel on board. Address your seniors and subordinates properly; for example, say, "Good morning, Commander Door" or "Good morning, Senior Chief Boate." This common courtesy is important.

## **GOING ASHORE**

Do not be too eager to go ashore after first reporting. Spend a few days getting oriented. Knowing your environment will be very helpful.

Customarily, heads of departments request permission for personnel to leave the ship from the executive officer; junior officers request permission from the head of the department, and, in some cases, from the executive officer. Find out from whom you obtain the necessary permission.

When you request permission to leave the ship, do not ask permission to go on liberty; simply request permission to leave the ship. Report to the OOD that you have permission to leave the ship, and remember the salutes required when leaving a ship. If you have a shore address and phone number, make sure they are on file in the ship's office. You may wear civilian clothing when going ashore.

Remember the custom of juniors getting into boats first and getting out last. If a boat becomes crowded and you are the junior, get out and catch the next one. Remember also that seniors are given the more desirable seats. Boats leave on time; so get a copy of the boat schedule.

## **ASSUMING YOUR DUTIES**

If you report to a ship, your first assignments will probably be as a junior division officer and a junior watch officer. The sooner you qualify as OOD, both in port and under way, or as duty officer for your particular department, the better. Such qualifications are important steps in your career. You can be sure if you do not qualify, your career will not go far.

You will remain in an "on watch but under instruction" status until you do qualify. You can count



upon the active interest of the other officers in getting you qualified, because your qualifying will lighten the workload for them. You will probably be on watch or standing duty 1 day out of 6, or more frequently. The senior watch officer will brief you on your duties.

## RELIEVING THE WATCH

Chances are you will be put on the watch list immediately upon reporting. Whether your duty is as OOD (in port) or junior officer of the deck (JOOD) (under way), the first thing to remember is to get on deck early. Collect as much information as possible before you report to relieve the watch. Remember also that relieving the watch is a serious evolution. You should complete the appropriate watch officer personnel qualification standards (PQS) as soon as possible. The *Watch Officer's Guide* (Naval Institute Press) is also a good source of information. It is available as a Navy nonresident training course (NRTC) through your Educational Services Office.

## RELIEVING AS A DIVISION OFFICER

Through your correspondence with your executive officer or sponsor, you will have a pretty good idea of your new duty assignment. As we stated earlier your first assignment usually will be as a junior or assistant division officer. That depends largely on the officer complement aboard the ship or station and the needs of the command.

If assigned as a division officer, you will be given a date, normally in writing, stating when you must relieve the present division officer. Relieving a division officer requires planning and organization for a smooth transition.

Start planning your relieving schedule as soon as you receive your duty assignment. The effectiveness of your relieving procedure will have a large influence on your initial success as a division officer.

Before you relieve, you should have a realistic awareness of the division's effectiveness and plans to correct any deficiencies that exist. The objective of the relieving procedure is that upon relief you will have positive control of your division. To accomplish this objective, you need a clear understanding of the division's personnel deficiencies and capabilities, material condition, operations, and mission.

If your new division has a division chief or a leading chief, this person can be an invaluable source of information about the division and its personnel. If

your division has no chief, talk to your command's senior enlisted adviser. A command's senior enlisted adviser is a command master chief (E-9), a command senior chief (E-8), or a command chief (E-7). Regardless of the title, your senior enlisted adviser can give you a good perspective of your new division. This person can also assist you in other areas, such as counseling and personnel problems. Make sure you cultivate a good relationship with your command's senior enlisted adviser. We also recommend the *Division Officer's Guide* to help you in your duties.

You should take the following steps in preparation for relieving as a division officer:

- As quickly as possible, learn the identity of your personnel and call them by rate and name. Learn as much as you can about their personal histories and professional capabilities by using the division officer's notebook and each individual's service record as sources of information. Establish communication with your personnel through formal and informal interviews. Observe their appearance, military bearing, and cooperation among themselves and with members of other divisions. Review your division's Personnel Qualification Standards (PQS) Program. Make sure it is up to date for each person and is being carried out aggressively. Review the master training plan for all formal school requirements. Note the projected rotation date (PRD) of division personnel and when a relief is to report. Review the Enlisted Distribution Verification Report (EDVR) for required Navy enlisted classification codes (NECs) for the division to ensure the right mix of personnel is on board.

- Inspect the material condition of the division for cleanliness, damage control, safety, and habitability. Inventory and inspect all equipment before assuming custody. Survey missing equipment. Routing of the survey is the responsibility of the division officer being relieved. Do not accept responsibility for past bad housekeeping. A good aid in making a material inspection is the checkoff list for the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV). Be sure to note whether discrepancies listed during the last inspection have been corrected. Also, check divisional file copies of all pending deferred action documents to get a firm idea of the division's material readiness status. Look at any active casualty reports (CASREPs). Make sure the division's planned maintenance system (PMS) is up to date and effective. Check the division equipment deficiency log (EDL) and the current ship's maintenance program (CSMP).

- Conduct an administrative inspection. Note any discrepancies from the last administrative inspection. The predeployment checkoff list can give you an excellent idea of what to do before you deploy. These administrative inspections will raise many questions, such as the following: Is the tickler file up-to-date? Does it contain due dates and references for all reports required? Are security procedures being followed?

- Talk informally with your superiors and members of other divisions to get a feeling of the general impression of your division. As a military division, how does it compare with others? Professionally, does your division work smoothly with other divisions, or is your division poorly coordinated and in conflict with other divisions? The right questions, if asked in the right places, can give you an excellent picture of your division's performance. To maintain continuity, get your predecessor's opinion of each person in the division, including areas of dependability, demeanor, personal problems, and any special leadership techniques (approaches) that work especially well with certain individuals.

- Upon completion of all necessary inspections and transfers, report in writing to the commanding officer, stating your readiness to assume responsibility for the division. In the report, state the condition of the division—its personnel, records, and facilities—and its state of readiness. Note any deficiencies that exist and recommend procedures for correcting them. Show the inventory status of all equipment and classified material assigned to your division and that you have accepted custody. List anything that is seriously wrong and any discrepancies that cannot be corrected in short order. Ensure your commanding officer is realistically aware of the conditions that exist in the division at the time of your relieving. However, avoid any personal attack on your predecessor unless that person's actions or attitude hampered the relieving process. Impersonal statements of conditions will suffice. Do not place yourself on the receiving end of grudging, minimal cooperation. A list of simple explanations of conditions and plans, including timing for correction, is not subject to misinterpretation.

During the relieving period, become familiar with established policies. Your administrative inspection will reveal many policies. To further clarify them, become familiar with *Standard Organization and Regulations of the U.S. Navy* (OPNAVINST

3120.32), ship's or station's instructions, departmental instructions, and letters that delegate authority.

You and your predecessor should inform division personnel of your relieving plans and keep them informed so that they have no doubt about who is in charge. You can avoid many problems by early clarification of policies and changes in policies regarding matters such as the watch, quarter, and station bill; department organization; sea bag and personnel inspections; leave; liberty; and mess cooking. Remember, however, a good rule of management is to avoid making any drastic changes until you have been on board for awhile.

## PERFORMING COLLATERAL DUTIES

In addition to your primary duty, your command will assign you some collateral duties. Although collateral is defined as "secondary or subordinate," do not regard such duties as unimportant; on the other hand, do not allow them to become paramount. However, do not permit your collateral duties to go unaccomplished. You must maintain a realistic balance between your varied, and sometimes conflicting, responsibilities.

The majority of collateral duties will require you to provide guidance and information to naval personnel about matters that affect their welfare both as individual citizens and as members of a military organization. A variety of commands and offices produce notices, instructions, pamphlets, books, films, posters, and other training aids that will assist you in these duties.

The following areas are potential pitfalls you might encounter if you do not approach your collateral duties properly:

- Registered publications. Many collateral duties require the use of registered publications. You must sign receipts for registered publications. Before signing, read carefully the instructions for handling registered publications. Check them carefully to be sure you get what you sign for, the registered numbers agree, and NO PAGES ARE MISSING. Additionally, when inventorying registered publications, ensure all publications have the latest changes properly entered and recorded. Keep them locked in your safe when you are not using them; do not leave them lying around or let them get out of sight. When you have no further use for them, return them and get properly cleared. Either have your receipt returned or have the regular custodian sign for them. A lost or

compromised publication is a serious matter; a letter of censure or court-martial could result.

- Signed property. If you sign for a pistol, binoculars, or other government property, be sure the property is securely stowed when not in use.

- Safety precautions. Shipboard life is inherently dangerous. You should never permit yourself or your personnel to use shortcuts that violate safety requirements. In addition to your own safety, you are responsible for the people who work for you. Learning safety requirements and shipboard safety regulations should be among your first accomplishments. Your ship or station safety officer can provide guidance on safety regulations. *Navy Occupational Safety and Health (NAVOSH) Program Manual for Forces Afloat*, OPNAVINST 5100.19, *Navy Occupational Safety and Health (NAVOSH) Program Manual*, OPNAVINST 5100.23, and *Naval Safety Supervisor*, NAVEDTRA 10808-2, are good references, among others, for you to review.

- Custody of funds. If assigned a job involving custody of funds, such as wardroom mess treasurer, be careful. When you take over, do not be in a hurry. Make a thorough check to ensure you get everything you sign for. Be thorough and firm. Refuse to relieve until you are satisfied everything is in order. Once you relieve, you are responsible.

- Auditing. If you are a member of an auditing board, be sure what you certify as present is actually present. Members of auditing boards have been severely censured for carelessness in making audits and taking inventories. The mere fact that someone else signs the audit or inventory does not mean you can sign blindly and assume the audit is accurate. Usually the junior signs first, at the bottom.

Listed below are three duty areas you may be assigned in addition to your normal duties:

1. Executive assistants. Duties in this area include assignments such as training officer, educational services officer (ESO), public affairs officer, and legal officer.

2. Boards and committees. You may find yourself on several different boards and committees. Some examples are Mess Audit Board, Nuclear Weapons Safety Council, Welfare and Recreation Committee, and Enlisted Examining Board.

3. Collateral duties. You may be assigned collateral duties such as library officer, athletic officer, shore patrol officer, and naval warfare publications library custodian.

## CARRYING OUT LEADERSHIP DUTIES

Your most important duty as a junior officer is the leadership of your personnel. Base your relationship with them on a thorough knowledge of their characters, abilities, and personal lives; but never become too informal.

As you study the organization of your duty station, learn to fit individuals into its structure. After gaining a working knowledge of the people in your division, talk to other division officers to discover their key personnel. Being able to draw on such key personnel will be of great value to you.

The chief petty officers in your division are most important to you. They know their jobs and the capabilities of the people under them. Work through your chiefs. Maintain the chain of command. Your chief petty officers realize you probably do not know all the technical details. They also realize you probably know more theory than they. A mutual exchange of practical knowledge from the chief and theory from the officer often result in a smoother operation. Do not assume the attitude that you know all the answers. You will always find one you will not know.

Do not lend money to, or have financial dealings with, enlisted personnel. Article 1111, *U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990*, is quite definite on this subject. If any of your personnel ask you for a loan, decline and inform them that Navy regulations prohibit your doing so. If the case is really deserving, the person should have no difficulty in obtaining a loan from the ship's welfare and recreation fund, the Red Cross, or the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society. Refer anyone in such circumstances to the proper people. Help run interference, and follow up to ensure they receive proper assistance.

Do your division business in the division. Do not permit enlisted personnel to hang around your room or in "officer's country." That sounds stuffy, but it is a sound and long-established custom. Maintain proper relations with your personnel at all times. Sometimes minor matters set off a long chain of events of increasing seriousness.

As previously mentioned, we strongly recommend you read *Watch Officer's Guide* and *Division Officer's Guide*. These books contain invaluable information for all junior officers.

### **PROTOCOL**

As a rule, senior officers do not immediately call attention to your minor faults or errors, but they do note these things. If you are slow in getting squared away, they might mention these deficiencies.

After you become oriented and feel comfortable in your new environment, you may wish to have guests aboard for dinner, take a look around, and go to a movie. That is an old naval custom, and an excellent one if it does not become an everyday occurrence.

Usually a holiday evening meal or Sunday noon meal is a suitable time for guests.

Clear your intention to have guests aboard for a meal with the wardroom mess caterer. The caterer must ensure sufficient places are set and enough food is prepared to go around.

When your guests arrive at the ship, either accompany them or be on deck to meet them. If your guest is a very important person (VIP), try to make an appointment for the person to see the captain for a few minutes. If that isn't possible, at least inform the captain that a VIP is aboard the ship.

Introduce your guests to your fellow officers. When they have guests, help keep the conversation going and be similarly helpful in other ways.